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Big plans with little money

Ministry of Environment focuses on sustainability and successfully combats poaching

Although the sector is considered to be the main pillar of the economy, the Ministry of the Environment, Forestry and Tourism is just 16th out of a total of 33 expenditure items in the Namibian budget for 2020-21. The minister relies on a lot of help from Germany and other development partners.



The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for forestry again for the first time. Accordingly, Environment Minister Pohamba Shifeta will soon be finalizing an environmental law that should regulate, among other things, the sustainable use of forest resources. Photo: archive

By Frank Steffen

Windhoek

In his budget proposal in Parliament, the Minister for the Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), Pohamba Shifeta, emphasized: "My ministry makes an important contribution to economic growth, poverty reduction and job

creation." The minister proposed for the financial year 2020-21 donations totaling \$ 584.5 million in Namibia. The amount of N \$ 479.5 million is earmarked for operating expenses and a further N \$ 105 million for development projects.

An amount of N \$ 208.5 million is earmarked for wildlife protection and the management of conservation and conservation areas - poaching must be combated. 1,790 suspects were arrested between 2018 and May 2020 for poaching high-quality and protected animal species.

"Our game and national parks are important for the socio-economic development of the country," said Shifeta. That is why it is important to maintain and build new roads, fences, water infrastructure as well as housing and park offices. For example, 20 kilometers of electric fence have already been relocated to Waterberg. As part of a three-year plan, 712 km of the 824-kilometer fence around Etosha National Park is to be renewed (although only N \$ 26 million is planned this year). His staff had already started to voluntarily repair the first 10 km in February 2020 (AZ reported), but COVID-19 interrupted this work.

Additional park infrastructure is to be built in the Bwabwata National Park and the Tsau // Khaeb National Park (former restricted area). The German credit institution for reconstruction (KfW) will help the state. Meanwhile, the development budget will be increased from N \$ 105 million to N \$ 159 million, according to the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), according to the budget proposal by Finance Minister Nangolo Mbumba, N \$ 17 million for the bushing project and a further 37 million has pledged to develop a sustainable environmental management plan in the north.

According to Shifeta, there are 86 communal areas in Namibia (as of 2019) that employ 5,350 people and generate local residents an income of N \$ 145 million. That is why it is important to keep the human-animal conflict under control. The MEFT is also pursuing a strategy to ensure the survival of the Namib desert horses. Finally, 75 horses, including 11 foals, were counted.

N \$ 25.6 million will be spent on protecting endangered species, N \$ 18.2 million will be spent on tourism development and gambling regulation, and N \$ 150.8 million will be spent on protecting wildlife Environment and natural resources. The environmental law should be completed soon and thus the sustainable forestry should be operated.

Climate change, biodiversity and land degradation are important issues that are being addressed with the help of the Global Environment Fund, the Green Climate Fund and KfW - a total of N \$ 775 million in aid has already been pledged.

Most recently, N \$ 93.5 million is earmarked for infrastructure and protected area monitoring, while the Ministry itself needs just under N \$ 88 million for administrative expenses. According to the main budget, Namibia expects an income of N \$ 333 million from environmental fees in the current financial year.